

**‘THE WAY OF YOUTH’: FURTHERING TEEN LITERACY
BY DAVE MCNEILL
MIDDLEWAY PRESS MANAGING DIRECTOR**

SGI President Ikeda’s book for young people, *The Way of Youth*, has helped initiate the launching of a new program to increase reading in high schools across the country. The “Mind the Gap” program is designed to jump-start book review columns in high school newspapers across the country, many of which do not have regular book review columns.

“Kids read for fun, and adults read for pleasure and information, but teens often only read because they have to. This is the gap we want to fill,” explains Marika Flatt, of Phenix & Phenix Literary Publicists, who brainstormed this idea as part of their promotional campaign for *The Way of Youth*.

After a test period in the Austin, Texas, area, which received an enthusiastic response, “Mind the Gap” was officially launched at Book Expo America, the book industry’s huge annual convention, on June 1.

Phenix & Phenix will supply sample book reviews and general guidelines on the review writing process, supplied by *Austin Chronicle* book review editor Clay Smith. They are also supplying *The Way of Youth* to all the high school newspaper staffs to kick off the slate of reviews.

“The ultimate goal is to increase teens’ interest in all types of literature, not just romance novels and magazines,” says Elaine Froelich, who is coordinating the program at Phenix & Phenix. “*The Way of Youth* is the perfect book to launch this program, because one of its central messages is the importance of reading to the growth of a person’s character.”

For more information on the “Mind the Gap” program or to get your high school involved, contact Elaine Froelich: (512) 478-2028 or elaine@bookpros.com.